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MAPPING INDIA

By Timothy L. Carens

IN RUDYARD KIPLING'S *Kim* (1901), the hero's education as colonial spy entails learning how to map the natural and constructed features of the Indian landscape. On one of his first missions, Kim surreptitiously measures the "mysterious city of Bikanir" and, with the "help of his little Survey paint-box," produces a diagram of the "wild, walled city" (218). Among other duties, he apparently serves as a subaltern agent of the Survey of India, an actual department established in 1878 to coordinate a number of cartographic projects already under way. The British effort to chart the interior of its colony had begun a century before, however. In 1767, the East India Company created the post of Surveyor General of Bengal. The Company continued to map India until ceding power to the crown in 1858, after which the government carried the project forward until independence. The impulse to survey India refused to die along with the political institutions that gave it life. It found a new mode of expression in the Raj revival films of the 1980s. In films such as *The Far Pavilions* (1984), the camera sweeps panoramically over snow-capped peaks, golden plains, and "wild, walled" cities, nostalgically re-capturing the majestic terrain ceded in 1947.

Some recent historical accounts of British map-making in India suggest that colonialist attitudes persist today. In *The Great Arc* (2000), a popular history of the Great Indian Arc of the Meridian, John Keay discusses a specific project begun in 1800 by William Lambton and later directed by the more famous George Everest (see Figure 10). These men and their assistants, Keay explains, applied recently developed trigonometry to recently conquered land, enabling the production of maps of unprecedented accuracy. Keay is not altogether insensitive to the link between scientific knowledge and imperial power, but he relegates ethical and political problems to the margins of a triumphant epic, described in his subtitle as *The Dramatic Tale of How India Was Mapped and Everest Was Named*. The book begins *in medias res* with a stirring account of obstacles faced by Everest in 1819, when his mettle was tested by rebellious native troops and a belligerent jungle climate. Although the human and natural forces opposing the young lieutenant were formidable, "neither mutiny, flood nor fever was going to impede his determination to excel" in the scientific conquest of India (10). Given the extensive influence in the academy of theories skeptically attuned to such rhetoric, it is surprising to find a variation of this dramatic tale in a recent scholarly history of Indian cartography as well. In *Indian Cartography: A Historical Perspective* (1997), P. L. Madan pauses within a discussion of the eighteenth-century surveys that preceded the work of Lambton and Everest to admire the "courage and determination" (80) of the British agents who moved a "step ahead of the moving columns of the armies," facilitating military

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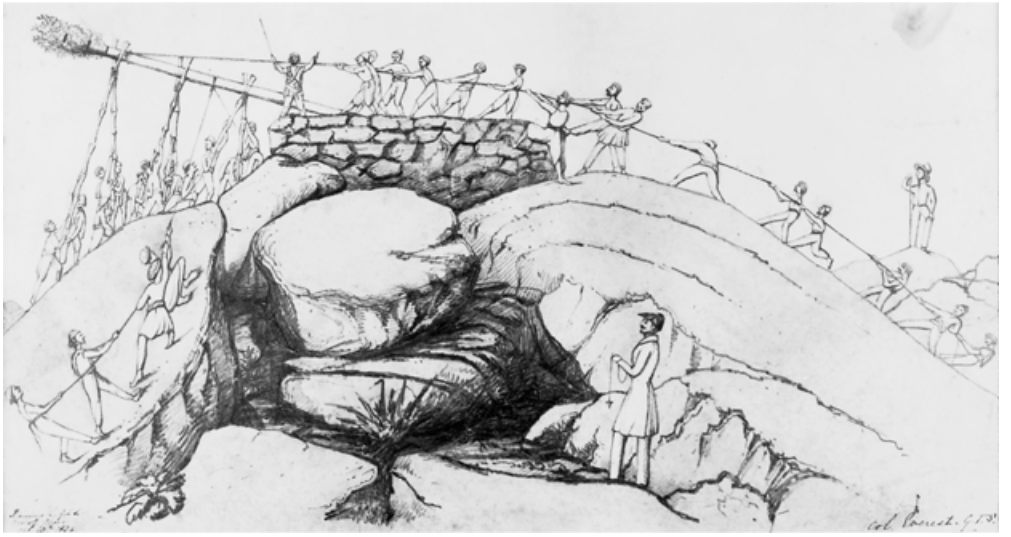


Figure 10. Godfrey Thomas Vigne, Sir George Everest and an assistant supervising work on the Great Trigonometrical Survey. Pencil and wash drawing, 1834. Oriental and India Office Collection (WD 3114). By permission of the British Library.

attack by mapping the features of the land (84). Here, too, the ethical complexities of violent conquest are eclipsed by the "drama of unravelling [sic] the mysteries of the unknown and the romance and the thrill involved in the making of maps" (84). Reproducing a drama written by Kipling and many others, Keay and Madan indicate the ongoing need for criticism equipped to explicate such mystifications.

From its inception, of course, postcolonial criticism has pursued the ideological significance of the representation of space. In the past several years, as the "excess of India"[1] in postcolonial criticism has grown still more excessive, the British map-making project has attained currency as vivid metonym of colonial epistemology. The drive to measure and encompass topographic features neatly paralleled and reinforced the drive for political and socio-economic hegemony. The British effort to chart the coastlines, measure the mountains, and diagram the cities of India involved an implicit assumption that the subcontinent was colonial terrain, destined to be penetrated, known, and controlled by British government. Yet recent analysis of geographic renderings of India reveals the inadequacy and uncertainty of colonial knowledge as much as its ambition. Although he proves himself an adept imitator of local costume and gesture, Kim does not, after all, excel as a cartographer. His map of Jeysulmir only achieves "something not remotely unlike the city" (218). It provokes a laugh from Mahbub Ali.

While Keay and Madan obscure such ironies by representing colonial cartography (Mapping an Empire) as triumphant penetration of the unknown, Matthew H. Edney brings them to the foreground in *Mapping an Empire* (1997). During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, developments in map-making technology fueled the British drive to know its burgeoning dominion as minutely as possible. James Rennell, the first Surveyor

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General of Bengal, strove to integrate route surveys conducted by many officers who possessed different levels of skill and who labored under varying conditions. The maps he produced were beautiful, and reliable enough for most purposes, but scientifically flawed. The generation of cartographers following Rennell, however, succeeded in applying advances in triangulation techniques that enabled much more accurate measurements. The Great Trigonometrical Survey, the institutional embodiment of this advance. It promised to furnish a "perfect geographical panopticon" in which the Indian landscape would become totally visible, laid bare to the infinitesimally accurate gaze of British power (319). The degree of precision to which British cartographers aspired far exceeded the military and economic utility of their maps. As Edney indicates, their "cartographic ideal" is best understood as a measure of the desire to assert and justify colonial governance. British map-makers sought ever-more precise and comprehensive knowledge in order to assure themselves of their cultural superiority, to affirm differences between the precise, scientific Western mind and its irrational Indian counterpart, encumbered by a mythic geography "made up," as Macaulay (1835) claimed, "of seas of treacle and seas of butter" (723).

Even as technologies for measuring space became increasingly precise, colonialist assumptions continued to define – and necessarily distort – the object of inquiry. As Balachandra Rajan points out in *Under Western Eyes* (1999), India was always a "geopsychic site" as well as a geographic one (91). Map-makers and surveyors created the land as they "ruled" it. Furthermore, as Edney argues, the history of British map-making in India reveals an ironic gap between "cartographic ideal" and actual accomplishments. The various institutions designed to subject India to omniscient vision often proceeded at cross purposes, investing extensive resources in incompatible methodologies. Surveyors and cartographers themselves were fallible bureaucrats, sometimes embroiled in petty squabbles with their colleagues, often incapacitated by climactic conditions, always dependent on native informants and laborers, and always problematically affiliated with structures of colonial power. Edney supplies an antidote to the image of the courageous and determined scientist at the fore of military maneuvers in his portraits of men whose scientific aspirations were frustrated by myriad sources of inaccuracy and uncertainty. The surveyors who did accompany the army, for example, often faced a "systematic failure of observation" (80). Blinded by heat haze, fog, and dust clouds stirred by marching soldiers, the "bold surveyor, who dared to know and tame nature," becomes a "lonely and timid man denied sight by nature's whim" (81). This revisionary portrait captures Edney's skeptical attitude to the history of British map-making in India, which was in his view less a dramatic penetration of the unknown than a "crisis-driven and almost anarchic" manifestation of the desire for mastery (121).

The surveys discussed in detail by Edney represent a fairly recent development of a colonial cartographic history that stretches back many centuries. Before British officials could imagine triangulating the interior surface of the subcontinent, early modern predecessors had to locate it. From the European perspective, India differed substantially from the "new world" of the Americas. It was rather a distant part of the old world, known to exist since classical antiquity. Alexander the Great had (momentarily at least) pushed the eastern boundary of his empire to the Indus. For centuries, however, India hovered on the distant verge of geographic knowledge. Until the Renaissance voyages of "discovery," Europe possessed scant reliable information about the location of the mythical opulent kingdoms of the East. Early modern studies has recently directed attention to the process through which the European consciousness fixed India more securely on its map of the world. This represents an interesting

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redirection in a field in which discussion of colonialism has been oriented to the West. As critics have recently recalled, the "discovery" of the Americas represented an accidental outcome of Europe's obsession with India.

In 1600, when the East India Company acquired its charter, the eventual shape and scale of the British raj could not have been imagined. In *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan* (1788), Rennell observes that "India has in all ages excited the attention of the curious," but that attention took different forms in different ages (xxi). In early modern Europe, curiosity was piqued by the desire for spices and other luxuries that drifted westward from an India defined broadly enough to include the Indonesian islands. Mercantile adventurers were particularly eager to appropriate the lucrative trade in these commodities from Middle-Eastern merchants. Literal and figurative maps of India in this period reflect these mercantile preoccupations. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach the subcontinent. Vasco da Gama, whose disastrous voyage was transformed into epic triumph by Luís Vaz de Camões in *The Lusiads*, was followed by Afonso de Albuquerque, dubbed by his king "Lord of the Navigation, Conquests and Trade of *Ethiopia, Persia and India*." This grand title captures a convergence of ideas at the center of *Framing "India*" (2001) by Shankar Raman, who argues that the "conjunction of navigation, conquest, and trade in that designation points to the inseparability . . . of the knowledge of space, the domination of space, and the socioeconomic organization of space" (144). Western desire for Indian commodities fueled the expansion of geographic knowledge of the world, which in turn transformed Europe's perception of itself in relation to the Eastern realm that it had "discovered." Early modern cartography thus began to formulate a "crucial opposition between an active colonial rationality and a passive colonial non-rationality" that later map-makers sought to uphold (16). Scholars of the period emphasize the necessity of distinguishing the historically specific form of early modern colonialism, but the attitudes they recover clearly bear a close family resemblance to more recent perspectives.

In the early modern period, antithetical geographies of West and East were complicated by intense rivalry among emergent European commercial powers. England, whose perspective Raman most thoroughly details, joined a field already crowded by Portugal, Spain, and the Netherlands. Its effort to forge a national identity as a colonial power involved differentiating itself from other European commercial powers as well as from the colonial space they all hoped to dominate. Raman offers a compelling account of this dynamic through analysis of John Dryden's *Amboyna* (1673), a neglected play that bears the name of an island where Dutch colonial officials had allegedly tortured and executed English traders. The play provides a highly biased perspective on Anglo-Dutch colonial rivalry through a sexual allegory of colonial trade and power. It contrasts an English hero who marries Ysabinda, a female embodiment of the East, to a Dutch villain who commodifies and rapes her. Dryden thus "imputes to the Dutch a narrow, grasping, and crassly materialistic 'interest'" while representing the English as honorable and disinterested (190). The melodramatic contrast is strained by the fact that the English hero, as an agent of the East India Company, also practices mercantile exploitation, and his complicity surfaces in language that calls into question the difference between honorable marriage and violent rape. In his readings of this and other literary texts, Raman advances intriguing and persuasive points about the "interplay of colonial expropriation and female subjugation" (274) in the early modern period, although his lengthy chapters sacrifice momentum as they elaborate historical and theoretical context.

Like Raman, John Michael Archer in old worlds, argues that the growth of European mercantile colonialism shapes the early modern English view of India. In *Old Worlds* (2001),

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Archer remains more conscious of the fact that the emergence of a European-dominated sphere of influence displaced a pre-existing geo-political order in which old-world countries such as India held greater economic power and cultural authority in relation to the West. Early modern English writers were challenged to make sense of and justify their domination of lands that the West had venerated since classical antiquity, particularly for the apparent endurance of their cultural traditions. They did so by beginning to associate Eastern locations with cultural decay, a shift that helped England to consolidate its self-image as a stable and enduring world power. By "invoking the threat of degeneration and situating it outside their borders," Archer contends, "Europeans reinterpreted their place in the Old World and managed their own anxieties about internal instability and decay" (7). The travel narratives, geographical texts, and literary works of the period disclose evidence of this broad shift in attitudes in their fascination with paradoxical emblems of cultural endurance and degeneration.

In his chapter on India, Archer discusses *sati*, a topic that has engaged feminist postcolonial critics such as Gayatri Spivak and Lata Mani, both of whom explore the issue of the Hindu woman's diminishing agency in the context of the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century British campaign to abolish the practice. Tracing the evolution of *sati* discourse from classical to early modern accounts, Archer develops a complex argument in which description of the Hindu widow's immolation reveals through a symbolic code the ambivalent Western view of India. "To the male European gaze" of the early modern period, he argues, "the burning woman was the ultimate sign both of disintegration and continuity in India and by extension the other old worlds, a spectacular consolidation of monumentality and performance in which body becomes statue and is consumed in the very act of commemoration" (141). Archer advances this claim through a discussion of travel narratives that describe *sati* and other cultural practices representing the paradoxical blend of tradition and degeneration. Sustained throughout by interesting analysis of rich etymologies, the chapter culminates in a reading of another of Dryden's plays, *Aureng-Zebe* (1675), the first English literary work set in India proper. The connection Archer asserts between economic dynamics of early-modern English colonialism and paradoxical attitudes toward India is plausible enough in its broad outlines, although he might have strengthened his argument, particularly in relation to the discourse of *sati*, with more tangible evidence of that connection. It remains a bit unclear how and why early modern commerce gives rise to such specific figures of monumentality and performance.

Both Raman and Archer suggest that early modern representations of India generally serve to justify the initial stage of Western domination. This perhaps simplifies their arguments, but it is fair to say that the relationship they construct between colonial ideology and literary representation reveals elaborate forms of complicity. In his series of elegant essays on depictions of India from the early modern to the Victorian period, *Under Western Eyes*, Balachandra Rajan adopts a perspective that assumes rather the "power of literature to flow around ideologies, to acknowledge and even propitiate their powerful presences," while at the same time circumventing their logic and frustrating their aims (9). As he explains and qualifies this position in the introduction of his book, Rajan establishes a sophisticated and clear theoretical approach that merits close reading by scholars in the field.

According to Rajan, maps of India drawn by early modern European writers reveal misgivings about a geographical order constructed to serve Western economic interests. In some texts, such misgivings are effectively marginalized by the glorification of exploitative commerce. Such is the case in *The Lusiads*, in which Camões represents the "wealth of

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Ind" as fitting reward for the "epic valor" of Portuguese voyagers and traders (35). In other texts, though, misgivings emerge with greater force to disrupt the epic narratives of empire. *Paradise Lost* rejects a simplistic moral geography that justifies the plunder of India by representing it as the site of corrupt opulence. Milton contrasts this conventional view with another in which India appears as the victim of infernal designs. He compares, for example, the "flying fiend" to the merchant traders who despoil India and the spice islands of their wealth (qtd. in Rajan 53). According to Rajan, the poem thus "inscribe[s] the Satanic voyage within subsequent voyages of exploration and conquest" and shifts attention from the "Orient as a primary site of evil to the Orient as supplier to a clientele who have discovered it and made use of it to pamper the weakness within themselves" (55). In a poem especially wary of self-indulgent desire, Western hunger for Eastern luxuries becomes a potent sign of original sin. In following chapters, Rajan deftly explicates the nuances of works by Dryden, James Mill, Hegel, Shelley, and others. Although the text promotes an essentialist notion of critical perspective in its references to "the Asian reader," *Under Western Eyes* affords rich and insightful readings. In its scope and subtlety of analysis, it matches Sara Suleri's *Rhetoric of English India* (1992).

In *Colonial Power, Colonial Texts* (1997), M. Keith Booker discovers a later stage of European economic development inscribed on the British map of India. Reading late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century British novels about India from a Marxist perspective informed by Georg Lukács and Fredric Jameson, he extends to the colonial scene the assumption that the "story of the bourgeois cultural revolution," or the gradual transition from feudalism to capitalism, "is always what is being told, in one way or another, in bourgeois literature" (1). Works by Kipling, Forster, Orwell, Paul Scott, and J. G. Farrell record the imperial phase of capitalism's global march. The grand history supposedly reflected in the work of these authors remains frustratingly schematic in Booker's account; it is axiomatic for Booker, and readers who would like to see him test its premises will be disappointed. His discussion of the novels, on the other hand, affords compelling detail and applies theoretical concepts in useful and specific ways.

In a chapter entitled "Staging the Raj," for example, Booker refines the application of Foucault to the colonial context. Like Edward Said, Booker perceives the centrality of the dialectic of knowledge and power as a tool of colonial power. But Booker claims that this dialectic never functions effectively enough to achieve hegemony, or even the appearance of it. As a result, colonial power finds that it must augment instruments of disciplinary control with strategies of domination that Foucault associates with pre-modern authority. *A Passage to India* shows that "for the British to maintain their rule in India, the disciplinary practices characteristic of bourgeois hegemony must be supplemented by the twin feudal-aristocratic practices of violence and theater" (42). The tendency of colonial power to revive feudal-aristocratic techniques is intriguingly overdetermined. On the one hand, it reflects an anxious search for ways to consolidate British control. On the other, it reveals the secret satisfaction that middle-class colonial officials derive from playing the role of feudal aristocrats, and thus suggests an ironic desire on their part to forestall the progress they claim to represent. Booker extends his study of these issues in a chapter on representations of the Indian rebellion of 1857 and other eruptions of colonial violence. Subsequent chapters consider the representation of history itself and the function of colonial nostalgia.

All the works of literary criticism noted above emphasize the economic context of colonialism. At one point or another, all demonstrate as well that patriarchal conceptions

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of femininity color the British map of India. Rajan is right to assert that India-as-woman represents a governing trope of colonial discourse. Whether "endearing or dangerous, reticent or treacherously secretive," India remains "consistently feminine" in the Western geographic imagination (120). Some of the implications of the tendency to feminize India emerge with startling clarity as early as *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan*. For Rennell, the "softness and effeminacy" of the Indian character emanates from the very land itself; it is "induced by the climate, and the yielding nature of the soil, which produces almost spontaneously" (xxi). Such language serves to naturalize and eroticize the conquest of India by "foreign invader[s]," whose attacks are to a large extent excused, having been "invited" by the feminine character of the land and her people (xxi).

The association of sexual violence with the "geopsychic site" of India has received a good deal of attention in relation to the uprising of 1857. As Jenny Sharpe and others have discussed, "Mutiny" narratives dwell on the imagined rape of British women by Indian men in order to recast political resistance as barbaric violation. In *Writing under the Raj: Gender, Race, and Rape in the British Colonial Imagination, 1830–1947* (1999), Nancy L. Paxton builds upon existing work by placing the topic of rape in India in a broader historical context. She begins her book by observing that the typical "Mutiny" rape represented only one of a number of different rape scenarios. As Rennell vicariously savored repeated violations of soft and yielding India, other colonists found themselves publicly condemned for supposedly enacting such fantasies. Edmund Burke famously accused Warren Hastings of symbolically violating India and literally dishonoring certain Indian women. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Romantic poets and novelists preferred to imagine the rape of Indian women by Oriental, rather than English, despots.

In order to account for these various rape scenarios, Paxton develops a psychoanalytic geographic model in which the imperial subject polices the border between British self and Indian other through a process of abjection in which sexual violence plays a central role. She emphasizes that colonial abjection produces different narratives in response to the historical moment, which helps to explain shifts from one rape scenario to another. Her chapters typically begin by recounting historically specific conflicts about the role and identity of women in England. According to Paxton, these conflicts are projected by English writers onto the Indian scene. In her chapter on Romantic depictions of the harem, she initially asserts that during the early nineteenth century, when "feminists, abolitionists, and other liberal reformers began to challenge the social and sexual contract that prevailed in Regency England, India offered an imaginative space where women's ideal place in the nation could be envisioned and where vexing problems concerning women's freedom, consent, sacrifice, and desire could be reconsidered" (38–39). Through readings of Byron's Oriental poems, Southey's "The Curse of Kehama," Shelley's "Laon and Cythna," and several early- to mid-century novels, she charts a broad range of responses to the conflict at hand. Other chapters focus on the temple dancer, Mutiny epics and romances, colonial orphans, interracial romance, and Modernist erasures of rape in the colonial context. Paxton conveys a solid grasp of a wide range of primary literature, and her comparative readings illuminate intriguing ideological conflicts between and within the texts she studies.

The feminization of India implicitly characterizes colonial "invaders" and governors as male, which postcolonial criticism has tended to reinforce by emphasizing the patriarchal bent of colonial discourse. Paxton argues, for example, that "Mutiny" novels "shore up Victorian notions of gender by assigning British women to the role of agency-less victim" of barbaric

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Indian men (112). According to Mary Procida's *Married to the Empire* (2002), however, such fictions masked a very different reality for the wives of British colonial officials. Many of these women who responded to the 1881 Census of India listed their husbands' occupation as their own, which shows the extent to which they perceived themselves to hold professional agency in the structure of colonial governance. The fact that census bureaucrats subsequently "corrected" the returns by changing the occupation to "housewife" in turn shows that "officially, there was no place for wives in the Raj" (31). Procida turns to such "unofficial" sources as diaries, letters, memoirs, and novels to build her case that Anglo-Indian women nonetheless made a place for themselves in the actual and symbolic work of ruling the land.

Largely freed from domestic drudgery by a large staff of servants, Anglo-Indian women also had the time to become adept in occupations practiced by their husbands, acting as (unpaid) professional partners. They also took part in sporting rituals mistakenly assumed to be the exclusive province of men. On big-game hunting excursions, British women as well as men symbolically enacted the compulsion to "discipline and subdue" the "environment of India itself" (144). Procida devotes three chapters to an examination of Anglo-Indian domesticity, emphasizing throughout that colonial society did not draw a discernible "line between a private femininity and a public masculinity" (50). The Anglo-Indian community perceived the domestic sphere as a theatrical microcosm of colonial administration. A "housewife" did her part for empire by effectively managing her servants, embodying and displaying her nation's genius for governmental efficiency. In short, British colonial culture in India produced a middle-class female identity that was not nearly so sharply demarcated from masculinity as postcolonial scholarship has asserted. Procida cautions against glamorizing this identity. If the wives of British colonial officials made forays into traditionally male realms of colonial work and play, their ability to do so depended on the subordination of India. In the decades preceding independence, Anglo-Indian women vociferously campaigned against extensions of rights and responsibilities to Indians. Procida rightly interprets their reactionary political stance as evidence that they perceived the extent to which decolonization threatened to deprive them of the power they enjoyed as "unofficial" servants of empire.

In *En-gendering India* (2000), Sangeeta Ray shows that the feminized map of India has a rich life beyond the cultural and temporal borders of British colonial discourse. The book begins with an anecdote about an address given by the Indian ambassador to the U.S. to the expatriate community. Seeking to quell anxieties about the erosion of tradition by globalization, the ambassador gestured to all the "daughters of India" present who were dressed in saris (1). Implicitly granting Indian men the freedom to "function as citizens of the world," the ambassador burdened Indian women with the responsibility to display the "inherent national culture" forged on distant ground (2). Postcolonial Indian culture thus oddly resurrects a central trope of British colonial discourse.

As Ray discusses novels by English and Indian writers, she develops the irony that distinct and politically opposed discourses advance their ideological objectives by manipulating the synechdoche of the woman-as-India. For her, it is the figure of the upper-caste Hindu woman who represents India. The specificity of this claim responds to the kind of assumptions made by the Indian ambassador, but Ray would have made her point more compelling by acknowledging the symbolic importance of non-Hindu Indian women in colonial and nationalist discourses. In her first chapter, she considers two historical romances written at the end of the nineteenth century by the Bengali novelist Bakimchandra Chatterjee, both

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set during the era of the consolidation of British rule. Ray persuasively interprets these novels as critiques of the colonial stereotype of the soft and effeminate Indian man, to which Chatterjee responds by constructing a vigorous Hindu masculinity equipped to serve the "motherland" (30). Perceiving India as sacred and familiar rather than as abject and foreign, patriarchal Hindu nationalism appropriates and rehabilitates the colonial trope. Ray's third chapter analyzes *The Home and The World* (1915), in which Rabindranath Tagore expresses his pessimistic attitude to emergent nationalism and feminism through the character of a Hindu wife who abandons the home only to become a destructive nation-goddess. The final chapter turns attention to contemporary novels about the partition of India that remain haunted by the link between India and the upper-caste Hindu woman. Ray sometimes involves herself in assertions perhaps too convoluted to serve her argument well, particularly when discussing texts that do not invoke the symbol on which the argument is based. For the most part, however, she dexterously traces the contours of a crucially important symbolic overlay on the map of India.

From the British colonial perspective, of course, charting the topography of the mysterious female colony represented a first step toward cultivating and domesticating her. Many colonial officials aspired to transform the literal and figurative landscape of India, in part by erecting structures designed to establish order, rationality, and civility in the jungle. In *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (1999), Ian Baucom offers a fascinating analysis of this presumption and its after life as he elaborates some of the more pointed ironies produced by colonial understandings of space and identity. In the mid-nineteenth century, he argues, Ruskin responds to industrialization and hybridity in the imperial metropolis by conceptualizing the Gothic as a "disciplinary and reformative architecture of Englishness" (71). While he invested architecture with the power to arrest deformations of the national character at home, others perceived that it might serve equally well in India. In an 1873 address to the Royal Society of Arts, for example, T. Roger Smith insisted that "our buildings ought to hold up a high standard of European art. They ought to be European both as a rallying point for ourselves, and as raising a distinctive symbol of our presence to be beheld with respect and even admiration by the natives of the country" (qtd. in Baucom 70). As Baucom perceives, belief in the civilizing aura of colonial architecture is shot through with anxiety about the instability of a national identity that, regardless of the "high standard" it marks, requires a "rallying point" to preserve itself from the contaminating influence of the landscape in which it resides. As a result of Ruskin's authority, English Gothic architecture was perceived as a particularly potent disciplinary structure for India – and yet some of its most elaborate embodiments served only to display the vulnerability of Englishness. In the Victoria terminus in Bombay, for example, sculptures of Indian plants and animals displaced northern gargoyles from their traditional perches. Evidently subject to a "creeping tropicalization," the emblem of colonial reformation is itself reformed by India (84).

An intensified form of this irony emerges in relation to the postcolonial landscape of England itself, where colonial "otherness," increasingly indistinguishable *as* otherness, has redrawn what Simon Gikandi calls the *Maps of Englishness* in his book of that title (1996). In his later chapters, Baucom studies Indian writers who regard from different perspectives the effects of colonial immigration. V. S. Naipaul rejects the urban metropolis for reasons that recall Ruskin's effort to reform it. Hoping to discover an essential and ideal England, he shuns London as a site that has lapsed into strangeness. His nostalgic obsession with an

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idyllic English past expresses itself even more fully in melancholic descriptions of crumbling country estates. Baucom contrasts Naipaul to Rushdie, a writer who discovers redemptive potential in the postcolonial immigration that has tropicalized urban England. In *The Satanic Verses*, as Baucom puts it, Rushdie rewrites the "cultural cartography" of London, "eras[ing] its boundaries and collaps[ing] the distinction between the here and the elsewhere" (212). Baucom lucidly traces such complexities of place and identity as he reads colonial and postcolonial texts.

The revised map of English identity affords an appropriately ironic conclusion to a discussion prompted by the Survey of India. In seeking to fix the external and internal boundaries of that wild and mysterious elsewhere, colonial map-makers affirmed a distinction between India, the object of imperial knowledge, and England, the site from which it emanated. Yet the imperial system that produced such antithetical geographies also set in motion historical dynamics that have begun to break them down. In the face of a "new world order" and its neo-colonial power relations, it would be naively premature to celebrate metropolitan hybridity as a triumphant revision of imperial geography. Still, as Baucom cautiously observes, the "tropicalization" of London and other urban and rural sites invested with Western national identity upholds an intriguing potential. In "Outside the Whale" (1991), Rushdie calls for "books that draw new and better maps of reality" (100), and it may well be that they will appear to take the place of imperial cartographies of identity.

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NOTE

1. I draw this phrase from the title of a review article by Rajan (1998), who discusses many of the critical books on India that appeared in the early 1990s.

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